



Dating of AM 162 B fol, a fragment of Brennu-Njáls saga

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Published in:
Opuscula - Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana

Publication date:
2018

Document version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (APA):
Kapitan, K. A. (2018). Dating of AM 162 B fol, a fragment of Brennu-Njáls saga. *Opuscula - Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana*, 16, 217-243.

BIBLIOTHECA ARNAMAGNÆANA

A JÓN HELGASON CONDITA

Vol. L

AUSPICIIS INSTITUTI ARNAMAGNÆANI
EDENDUM CURAVERUNT
ANNETTE LASSEN
PHILIP LAVENDER

OPUSCULA

Vol. XVI

HAFNIÆ MMXVIII

IN ÆDIBUS MUSEI TUSCULANI

OPUSCULA

Vol. XVI



Redaktører
ANNETTE LASSEN
PHILIP LAVENDER

COPENHAGEN 2018

MUSEUM TUSCULANUM PRESS

INDHOLD

Gottskálf Jensson, Alex Speed Kjeldsen & Beeke Stegmann: A Fragment of Norwegian Royal Charters from ca. 1205. A Diplomatic Edition and Analysis	1
Povl Skårup: Beregninger over AM 580 4to og Holm perg 7 4to	53
Ingvil Brügger Budal: A Translation and Its Continuation. The Use of the Present Participle in <i>Elíss saga ok Rósamundar</i>	63
Maria Teresa Ramandi: Reassessing <i>Agnesar saga</i> . The Evidence of AM 238 11 fol	91
Stephen Pelle: An Unedited Sermon from the Eve of the Icelandic Reformation	113
Philip Lavender: Saxo in Iceland Again. <i>Vermundar þáttur og Upsa</i>	149
Sheryl McDonald Werronen & Katarzyna Anna Kapitan: An Edition of <i>Ambrósíus saga og Rósamunda</i> Based on BLAdd 24 969	179
Katarzyna Anna Kapitan: Dating of AM 162 B α fol, a Fragment of <i>Brennu-Njáls saga</i>	217
Benyttede og citerede håndskrifter	245
Navneregister	249

DATING OF AM 162 B A FOL, A FRAGMENT OF *BRENNU-NJÁLS SAGA*

Katarzyna Anna Kapitan

THE MANUSCRIPT FRAGMENT AM 162 B α fol in the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies in Reykjavík contains text from *Brennu-Njáls saga*, the longest and most popular *Íslendingasaga*. The fragment belongs to a collection of ten fragments of *Brennu-Njáls saga* under the common shelf mark AM 162 B fol. The proposed datings of AM 162 B α fol vary from the fourteenth (Skúli Þórðarson Thorlacius 1809: xxiii; Jón Þorkelsson 1889: 676, 773) to the fifteenth century (Kålund 1889: 117), with the latter generally being accepted in the literature.¹ Surprisingly, no argumentation based on philological analysis to confirm this dating has yet been presented. Therefore, the present article aims to establish the fragment's date of writing, based on the analysis of linguistic and paleographic features.

This article is based on the research I conducted in Iceland in the spring of 2014 to obtain a master degree in *Medieval Icelandic Studies* from the University of Iceland. My research was conducted in collaboration with the *Variance of Njáls saga* project, which was run at the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies in the years 2011–2013. Even though this article is based on the text of my dissertation, its content has been revised and corrected, therefore, this publication should be used for further referencing. The completion of my MA-project would not have been possible without the guidance and help of Haraldur Bernharðsson, my project supervisor, as well as advice from Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, and Alaric Hall, to whom I want to address my sincere gratitude. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, for awarding me the *Icelandic Government Scholarship*, which made my studies in Iceland possible. Last but not least, I would like to thank the editorial board of *Opuscula* for valuable comments at the final stages of preparing this publication.

¹ The latter dating can be found in Finnur Jónsson's (1908) and Einar Ól. Sveinsson's (1954) editions of the saga.

The article is divided into three main parts. The first part describes the physical features of the manuscript. The second part analyses the paleographic features. The final part discusses the orthographic and phonological features. These parts are followed by a section devoted to the relative dating of the manuscript and the conclusions. The article is accompanied by a diplomatic edition of the fragment's text, which has not previously been published in its entirety, although Konráð Gíslason (1875) and Einar Ól. Sveinsson (1954) included selected readings of AM 162 B α fol in the variant apparatus to their editions of the saga.

Physical description

This section describes briefly the main physical features of the fragment, such as the manuscript's size, layout and marginalia.

AM 162 B α fol is a parchment manuscript fragment in quarto format. It consists of two conjoint leaves; the size of leaf 1 is 197 mm × 142 mm and of leaf 2 195 mm × 147 mm. The bottom corner of leaf 2 has been trimmed and a rectangle of parchment of ca. 8 mm × 19 mm cut off, as shown in Figure 1. The support is in rather good condition, even though it is dark and slightly damaged owing to use, making the text illegible in several places on leaves 1r and 2v. Given the clearly visible folding lines on the leaves, the fragment must have been used for bookbinding or as a book cover.

The fragment's written area covers around 60 % of the surface. Each leaf contains a block of text of ca. 150 mm × 115 mm, organized in one column. Leaf 1r contains 25 lines of text, leaves 1v and 2r both have 24 lines, and 2v has 26 lines. Pricking marks are clearly visible and arranged at regular intervals of ca. 5 mm. No signs of ruling are evident, and the scribe did not follow the lines that the pricking would suggest.

This bifolio must have been the innermost in its gathering, as the text preserved on 1v and 2r is continuous and corresponds to lines 7:65–9:20 in Konráð Gíslason's (1875) edition of the saga. There are two empty spaces for initials to indicate chapter division, both two lines tall: the first one at the beginning of chapter 8 (1v:4–5, Figure 6) and the second one at the beginning of chapter 9 (2v:11–12, Figure 1). If the fragment originally belonged to a codex

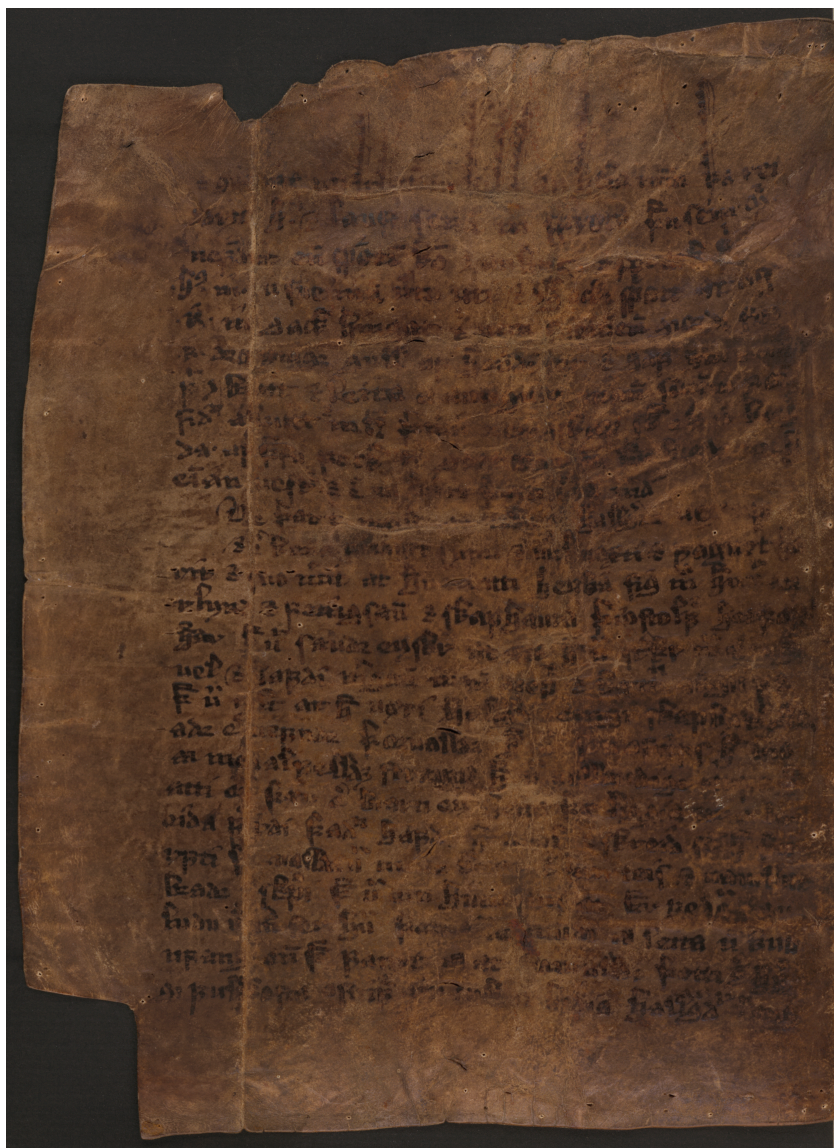


FIGURE 1: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, AM 162 B α fol. Partly illegible leaf 2v, folding lines clearly visible, a rectangle of parchment cut off.

Photo: handrit.org

which contained exclusively *Brennu-Njáls saga* this codex would have comprised ca. 195 leaves, and the fragment would belong to its second quire.²

There are two sets of marginal notes in AM 162 B α fol, one of them written presumably close to the date of the manuscript's writing,³ the other more recent scholarly marginalia.⁴ Additionally, the fragment has been foliated in red ink in the top right corners of leaves 1r and 2r.

²The estimation is based on the comparison of AM 162 B α fol with the normalized text of Reykjabók (AM 468 4to, Sveinn Yngvi Egilsson 2003). To estimate the position of AM 162 B α fol in the hypothetical manuscript (which I will designate Xα), the size of the lacuna has been estimated at ca. 23 600 characters with spaces, which corresponds to ca. 17.2 pages with the size and layout of AM 162 B α fol (8.5 leaves). If the hypothetical manuscript Xα had a "typical" quire structure (i.e. was built exclusively from conjoint leaves), the fragment AM 162 B α fol would have come in the second quire, or leaves 12r–13v, assuming that four bifolia made up one quire: I (1 + 8, 2 + 7, 3 + 6, 4 + 5); II (9 + 16, 10 + 15, 11 + 14, 12 + 13). The text of *Brennu-Njáls saga* would then have begun on leaf 3v and continued throughout the next 17 pages (until 11v), to reach the text of AM 162 B α fol on leaf 12r. But if the first quire contained three conjoint leaves instead of four: I (1 + 6, 2 + 4, 3 + 4); II (7 + 14, 8 + 13, 9 + 12, 10 + 11) then fragment AM 162 B α fol would have come on leaves 10r–11v in the second quire. In this case, the text of the saga would have had to begin on leaf 1v. This scenario seems possible, as there are examples of medieval manuscripts whose texts start on the verso side of the first leaf, for example, the manuscript Skafinskinna (GKS 2868 4to). These calculations are, however, purely hypothetical and there are two reasons to be wary. Firstly, because they are based on the text of Reykjabók, which is from a different sub-branch of the stemma to AM 162 B α fol (which along with AM 162 B β fol forms a separate subgroup within the X-branch). Secondly, the fragment might have come from a loose quire which was never part of any codex.

³The traces of older marginal notes can be found in the right margin of leaf 1r (next to the lines 15–23), and in the left margin of leaf 2v (next to the lines 2–3). Even though the notes were scratched off making them mostly illegible, it is possible to read some characters. The orientation of the text is along the vertical axis, when the fragment is turned ninety degrees counter-clockwise. The first character, by the line 15, might be a capital "H", then comes a portion of text that is completely illegible, with green stains over it, and at the end of the note the characters "a þat þ2" or "a þat þr" can be read. The looped ascenders and the shape of "a" are similar to the letter forms used throughout the fragment, which might suggest a medieval hand.

⁴The scholarly marginalia predate, or are contemporary to the translation of the saga into Latin from 1809, where AM 162 B α fol is referenced as *fragment b*, which corresponds to the marginal notes in the top margin of leaf 2r: "Niala", "Fragm. membr. b". The note on the bottom margin of 1r refers to the content of the fragment: "(α.) Nials s. c. 7–9", similarly in the bottom margin of 2r: "(Nials s. c. 8–9)". In the top margin of 2r in the right-hand-corner note

Paleographic Analysis

This section gives a brief overview of selected paleographic features of the manuscript, including the script type, common abbreviations and decorations.

AM 162 B α fol is written in one hand throughout, not yet identified in other manuscripts. The script is a formal deviation of *cursiva antiquior* (a subtype of gothic cursive). This formal deviation was employed mainly in manuscript books, and it can be distinguished from the traditional *cursiva antiquior* by its “textualization”. Derolez (2003: 128–29) describes textualization as the practice of introducing a greater formality into an informal cursive script, with the intention of employing this script type for books. One of the main components of this change is, for instance, a reduction in the number of ligatures. The letters that were originally linked became separated, although they would often touch each other. The letters often preserved the form they had in the ligature, which resulted in multiple forms of the same letter. The textualization of script is manifested in AM 162 B α fol by, *inter alia*, the elaborate ductus which various characters exhibit.

Cursive script reached Iceland in the first half of the fourteenth century; it can be found in charters as early as 1330, for example in AM dipl isl fasc 1 4 from 5 July 1330 (Stefán Karlsson 1963a: 6; 1963: 10). However, cursive script does not appear in manuscript books before the last decades of the fourteenth century, for example in AM 194 8vo, dated to 1387, and *Flateyjarbók* (GKS 1005 fol), dated to 1387–1394 (Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson 2007: 66–69). Cursive script can be found in manuscript books in the vernacular well until the sixteenth century, for example in AM 604 4to, dated to ca. 1550 (Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson 2007: 98–99; 2008: 91; Craigie 1938).

The scribe is consistent in his use of alphabetic signs throughout the fragment, exclusively using the two-story “a” and the tall “f” extending below the baseline (as for example in the word *svaraði* on Figure 2). The two-lobe insular “f” dominates, but in a few cases the lobes seem to be not fully closed (Figure 3b).

“fol 1” can be read, but the numeral was crossed over. In the top margin of 1r there are faded characters “x” or “α”, and “8”.

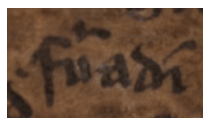


FIGURE 2: The shapes of the letter “a” and the tall “s” in the word *svaraði*.



(A)



(B)



(C)

FIGURE 3: The shapes of the letter “f”.

Both the “f” and the “p” are constructed with broad vertical strokes throughout the fragment (Figures 4b and 4a). The ascenders of the tall letters “b”, “h”, “k”, “l” and “p” are always looped, but they are not written with one smooth stroke, but are rather constructed with two or more separate strokes (Figure 4).

The letter “z” is used exclusively after the letters “o”, “ð”, “y”, and “g”. Yet, there are two exceptions to this general practice: in “bruttu” (1v:5) “r” was used after the rounded letter “b”, while in “bezt” (2r:8) “z” is used instead of “r”, which appears frequently after “e”. In one example, “faguþz” (2v:12), the “z” is used after “u”, while elsewhere the regular “r” usually appears.

The text of the manuscript is extensively abbreviated. The conjunction *ok* appears exclusively in the abbreviated form, represented by the Tironian note. The Tironian note appears in two main forms: one is with the lower part curving upwards to the right “ε” (Figure 5c) and another with a straight lower part, which resembles the letter “z” with a slash (Figure 5a). In some cases there is a curve or lobe attached to the character on its left-hand side, as represented in Figure 5b. The “z”-shaped Tironian note evolved into the crossed form “ε” in the second half of the fourteenth century: it can be found for example in *Skarðsbók* (AM 350 fol), dated to 1363, and *Flateyjarbók* (GKS 1005 fol), dated to 1387–1394 (Hreinn Benediktsson 1965: 91).

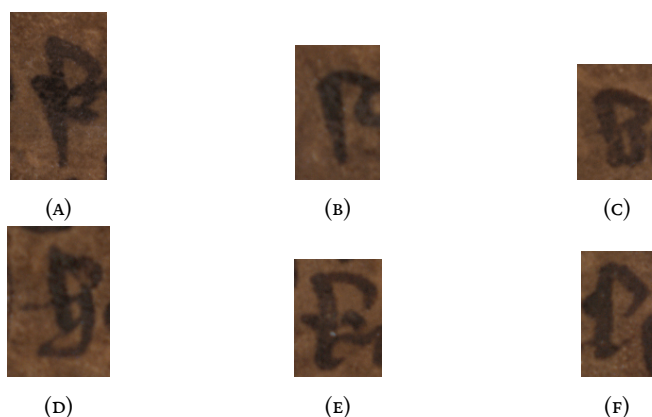
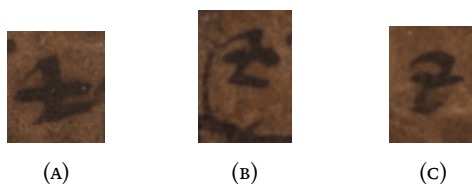


FIGURE 4: The shapes of the tall letters.


 FIGURE 5: The shapes of the abbreviation *ok*.

Additionally, other traditional abbreviation symbols appear: for example, the nasal stroke representing “n” or “m”, the superscript “^æ” for “ra”, the superscript “^ʀ” for “er”/“ir”, the linear brevisgraph “^z” for “rum” and the superscript “^g” attached to the letter “h” (“h”) to abbreviate the name *Hǫskuldr*. Also, superscript letters appear to be substituted for combinations of letters; when a superscript letter is a consonant (C), it usually stands for one of the combinations eC, iC, or aC, but when it is a vowel, it stands for that same vowel in combination with a consonant, for example, “*uid*” (1v:1), “*til*” (1r:4), “*uoru*” (2r:20).⁵

The decorative long ascenders in the top lines of each leaf, as can be seen in

⁵For a more detailed discussion of Old Norse-Icelandic abbreviations see Driscoll (2009) and Hreinn Benediktsson (1965).

Figure 6, are a characteristic feature of AM 162 B α fol, which might serve as evidence for the date of writing. They resemble the decorative long ascenders in the charter AM dipl isl fasc IX 34, written in cursiva antiquior in Hjarðarholt in Laxárdalr on 12 May 1434 (Stefán Karlsson 1963a: 198; 1963: 318).⁶ This distinguishing feature also appears in other fifteenth-century charters, for example in AM dipl isl fasc VIII 17, dated to 1427 (Stefán Karlsson 1963a: 166; 1963: 264), and AM dipl isl fasc IX 21, dated to 1432 (Stefán Karlsson 1963a: 189; 1963: 302). Nevertheless, decorations on the long ascenders of tall letters are not an invention of the fifteenth century, as might be assumed from the dating of the charters mentioned above; a variety of decorations can be found in, for example, Scandinavian and English manuscripts from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁷

Given the script type and selected paleographic features, the manuscript was probably written in the late fourteenth century or later.

⁶Letter forms that were decorated this way in the charter do not exactly match the letters in AM 162 B α fol: in AM dipl isl fasc IX 34 the characters with decorated ascenders in the top line are “t”, “d”, “p”, “f”, “b”, and “h”, while in AM 162 B α fol the “f” is never decorated, even though it appears in the top line position. In AM 162 B α fol, “k” is decorated, but in the charter this character does not appear in a top line position. Nevertheless, the style of decoration seems to be very similar.

⁷Some similarities could be found in a thirteenth-century manuscript, DG 4–7, from the University of Uppsala Library, dated to ca. 1250, which contains moderate decorations on the long ascenders appearing in the top lines, especially apparent in the hands of both scribes responsible for copying the *Strengleikar* text, for example, on ff. 30r–v (Tveitane 1972: 21). This feature can be found also in a fourteenth-century manuscript, AM 544 4to, Hauksbók, ff. 25v–28v, 29v–31r and 33r–33v; these leaves are believed to have been written in Haukur Erlendsson’s hand († 1334), who presumably wrote the greater part of Hauksbók including ff. 22r–34r in AM 544 4to (Jón Helgason 1960a: ix–x, xx). A tradition of decorative long ascenders in top lines can also be found in English manuscripts, for example, in Cambridge Trinity College, B 15 17, f. 19v, dated to the fourteenth century (Benson & Blanchfield 1997: 56–59), and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodl 712, f. 140r, dated to the mid-fourteenth century (Parkes 2008: 7), and Bodl 316, f. 71v, dated to 1394–1397 (Parkes 2008: 5), as well as later fifteenth-century manuscripts, such as Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 11, f. 90r, dated to ca. 1412 (Parkes 2008: 23), Bodl 596, f. 2r, dated to ca. 1415 (Parkes 2008: 14), and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Arch Selden B 10, f. 205r, dated to the first quarter of the sixteenth century (Parkes 2008: 15).

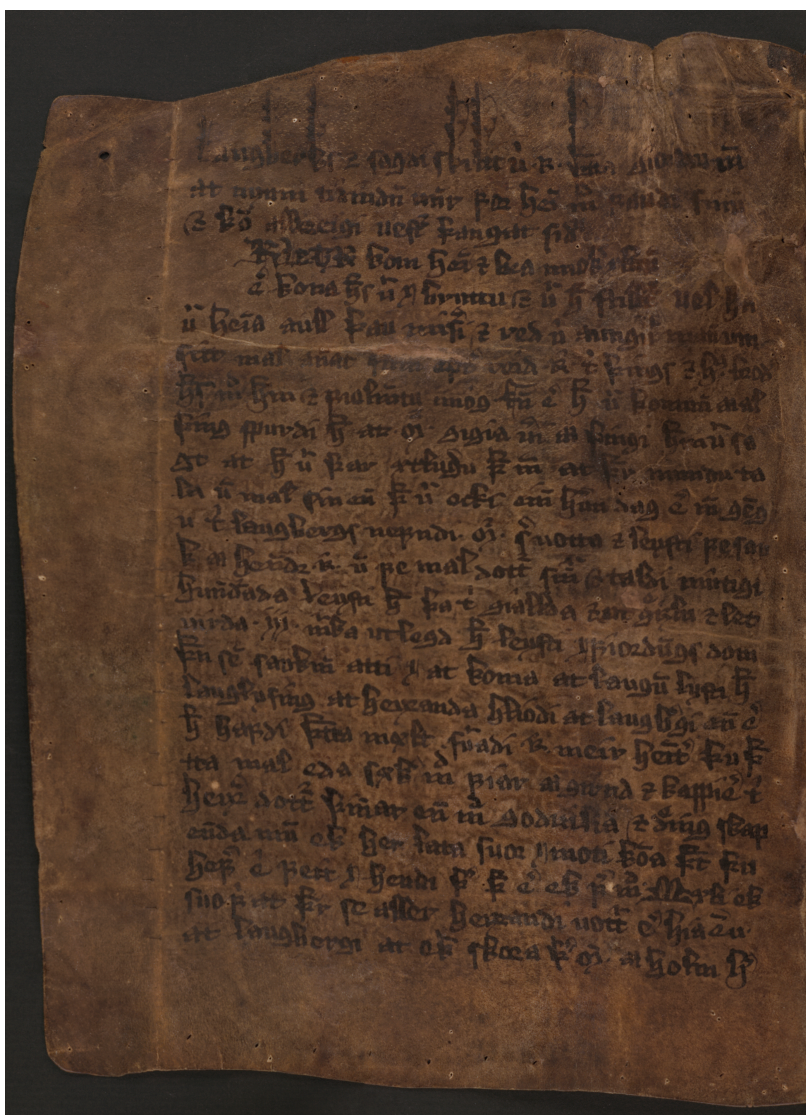


FIGURE 6: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, AM 162 B α fol. Decorated long ascenders on the top line of leaf 1v.

Photo: handrit.org

Linguistic Analysis

This section focuses on the linguistic analysis of the text preserved in AM 162 B α fol. An overview of selected phonological features is presented, followed by a similar account of orthographic features.

The orthography of AM 162 B α fol suggests that the earliest phonological mergers of Icelandic had already taken place. For example, the merger of the long oral vowels *ǫ* and *á* into the vowel *á* can be found in the spelling of “*ta|la um mal fín*” *tala um mál sín* (1v:10–11) acc. neut. pl.⁸

There is no distinction in the orthography between representation of the low back rounded vowel *ɔ* and mid front rounded vowel *ø*, thus the merger of *ɔ* + *ø* > *ö* had already taken place, for example “*rada gíozd*” *ráðagørð* (1r:24) and “*fíozdu*” *fjörðu* (1r:1).⁹ The vowel *ö* resulting from their merger is presented as “au” and “o”. The scribe’s orthographic practice is to write “o” after “i” and “u”, as for example, in “*fíozdu*” *fjörðu* (1r:1), “*gíozfer*” *gørvir* (2r:17), and “*füoz*” *svør* (2v:21), but “au” elsewhere, as in “*lauglyfing*” *løglysing* (1v:17).

Also, the merger of the long vowels *é* + *ø* > *æ* had already taken place, and the stressed vowel is exclusively represented with “æ”, such as in “*bædí*” *báði* (2r:9) and “*fræknaztr*” *fróknast* (2r:10).¹⁰

There are no examples that would suggest that the merger of the high front vowels *i* + *y* > *i*, *i* + *y* > *i*, and *ei* + *ey* > *ei* had already taken place. The spelling follows the orthography of the period before the merger, for example “*flytja*” *flytja* (1r:2), “*nyum*” *nýjum* (1v:2), “*fauðz eyfkr*” *sudðreyskr* (2v:15). There are no reverse spellings to suggest the derounding of *y*, *y* or *ey* either.¹¹

⁸On the oldest mergers in Icelandic see Hreinn Benediktsson (2002: 57–59).

⁹The merger *ɔ* + *ø* > *ö* is dated to the early thirteenth century (Hreinn Benediktsson 2002b: 60–61).

¹⁰According to Stefán Karlsson (2002: 838; 2004: 42), in the early stages of the *æ* merger the resulting vowel was denoted with the use of various characters that had previously been used for both merging vowels *ø* and *æ*. The symbol “æ” started to become the predominant form of representation by the year 1400. The merger of these long vowels probably took place in the middle of the thirteenth century, but was not completed until early in the fourteenth century (Hreinn Benediktsson 2002b: 61; Stefán Karlsson 2004: 11).

¹¹The merger of *y*, *y* and *ey* into *i*, *i* and *ei* is believed to have started in the fifteenth century and finished in the seventeenth century (Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: xv–xvii; Guðvarður Már

The fragment contains examples of the diphthongization of vowels both before *gi/gj* and before *ng*. The diphthongization of the short *e* before *gi/gj* appears for example in “feigía” *segja* (1r:9) and “alldzeígi” *aldregi* (1v:3).¹² The diphthongization of the short *e* before *ng* appears for example in “leingǫ” *lengi* (1r:3), “feingfaum” *fengsöm* (2v:14), and “eǫngǫ” *engi* (2v:17). There is also one spelling without a diphthong “geng|u” *gengu* (1v:11–12).¹³ Additionally, there is an interesting example of diphthongization of *e* before *kki* in “reykiu” *rekku* (1r:5).¹⁴ No signs of the diphthongization of *a* can be found in the fragment, and the scribe is consistent in spellings such as “þangat” *þangat* (1v:3). No clear judgment can be made regarding the diphthongization of *ö*. There are two examples: “holmgaunguna” *holmgonguna* (2r:6) and “aunguan” *ongvan* (1v:6) which cannot be used as evidence of diphthongization, since “au” could be just the graphical representation of the phoneme *ö*, which seems to be a common practice of the scribe.

Gunnlaugsson 1994: 65–70). The first examples of the orthographic representation of “i” for *y* can be found as early as the thirteenth century, in words like *þykkja* or *fyrir*, but the reasons behind this phenomenon are different and cannot be considered as part of the general derounding of *y* (Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson 1994: 32–37; Haraldur Bernharðsson 2004: 130). However, some scribes in the sixteenth century maintained the distinction between *y* and *i*. The examples of this practice can be found in the orthography of AM 685 a 4to, from ca. 1550, and GKS 1318 4to, from 1550–1575 (Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson 1994: 73–76; Jón Helgason 1960b).

¹² The diphthongization before *gi/gj* took place in the beginning of the fourteenth century (Alexander Jóhannesson 1923–1924: 68; Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: xii, see also recent literature overview in Jón Axel Harðarson 2007: 70–78).

¹³ The diphthongization before *ng/nk* first appears around the year 1300, when some high vowels were lengthened, and others were diphthongized. For example, *e* was diphthongized to *ei*, and *ö* to *au*, while *i* was lengthened to *í*, *y* to *ý* and *u* to *ú* (Noreen 1923: 95–96, 110; Alexander Jóhannesson 1923–1924: 68). The most recent overview can be found in Aðalsteinn Hákonarson (2010).

¹⁴ I am currently working on an article elaborating on this matter. The preliminary research results suggest that this spelling might be associated with a number of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts.

There are no examples with diphthongized \acute{e} [e:] > [ie], [je]. This could be considered an archaic feature of the manuscript.¹⁵ A complete list of written-out forms includes: “feit” *féit* (1r:2), “feít” *féit* (1v:22), “þer” *þér* (1r:6, abb: 1v:22, 1v:24, 2r:21), “fəfau|k” *fésok* (1v:12–13), “fer” *sér* (2r:10, 2v:24), “leku” *léku* (2r:18), “lek” *lék* (2r:19), “feck” *fékk* (2v:9), “het” *hét* (2v:14).

Vowel epenthesis had already taken place at the time of the manuscript’s writing. The epenthetic vowel is attested in the form “fagu2” *fagrt* (2v:12) and through the reverse spelling of the masc. dat. sing. “faud2” *fōður* (1v:2). However, the rounded “2” in “faud2” might also represent the *ur*-ending, as it does, for example, in *Guðbrandsbiblíá*, dated to 1584 (Bandle 1956: 156–57). As such, “2” could also represent endings with epenthetic *u* in the forms such as “henndz” *hendr* (1r:15), “faud2 eyfkr” *sudreyskr* (2v:15), or “nefndz” *nefndr* (2v:18).¹⁶

In the fragment there are no signs of consonant epenthesis, but the spelling “kalldyzūm” *karldyrum* (1r:12) indicates that *rl* and *ll* were already pronounced in the same way, presumably as *tl*. This spelling, however, could be an effect of assimilation of *rl* with *ll*, which is a thirteenth-century feature (Bandle 1973: 45; Kjeldsen 2013: 203).

Additionally the shortening of word-final “rr” > “r” is in evidence, for example, “ber” *berr* (2r:3), this development also started already in the fourteenth century (Stefán Karlsson 2004: 21; Haraldur Bernharðsson 2013: 193–94).

There are no examples of fricativization of *t* in word-final position. The orthography of the scribe is very consistent, and all forty examples have the final “t” preserved, as presented below in the complete list of words where dental fricatives appear in word-final position: “þangat” *þangat* (1v:3), “fārit” *farit* pret. ptc. (1r:24), “bꝥugdit” *brugðit* (1r:25), “annat” *annat* (1v:7, 2r:2), “iammicit”

¹⁵ The diphthongization of long monophthongs in Icelandic manuscripts appears sporadically as early as the thirteenth century, becomes more common in the second half of the fourteenth century, and becomes prominent in the course of the fifteenth century. Initially, diphthongization is manifested in spellings “ie”/“ie” for the long *e* (Björn K. Þórolfsson 1925: xiii–xiv; Bandle 1956: 45–46; Haraldur Bernharðsson 2013: 166–69, 415–16).

¹⁶ The *u*-insertion began in the late thirteenth century and at the beginning of the fourteenth century in words with *r*-ending immediately preceded by a consonant (Haraldur Bernharðsson 2013: 185–89, 415).

jaðnmikit (2r:2), “feit” *féit* (2r:3, 2r:9), “farit” *farit* pret. ptc. (2r:9), “foðdit” *sorðit* (2r:22), “hingat” *hingat* (2v:5), “at” *at* (1v:2, 1v:8, 1v:10 × 2, 1v:16, 1v:17 × 2, 1v:23, 1v:24 × 2, 2r:7, 2r:8, 2r:11, 2r:12, 2r:14, 2r:22, 2r:24, 2v:4, 2v:13, 2v:15, 2v:25), “þat” *þat* (2v:11), “því at” *því at* (1v:21, 2r:7, 2r:9), “mikit” *mikit* (2r:11, 2r:12, 2r:16, 2v:13).

There are no reverse spellings which could suggest the change either. The lack of evidence of fricativization means that either the fricativization of *t* into *ð* had not taken place at the time of the manuscript’s writing, or that the scribe was basing his spellings on the exemplar without modernizing them. The latter explanation seems more probable, since the use of “t” in word-final position is a very archaic feature which could be consistent with early fourteenth-century orthography. Such an early dating does not seem probable when other innovative features of this fragment are considered. However, the orthography of the scribe of AM 162 B α fol seems to be consistent in this aspect – even if the text is short, it is remarkable that there is not a single instance of “d” for earlier “t” in the fragment.

The fricativization of *k* into *g* in word-final position is attested in the fragment, in examples “fig” *sik* (2v:13) and “míog” *mjok* (1v:8), nevertheless archaic forms such as “ek” *ek* (2r:2) and “míok” *mjok* (1v:4) dominate. The older spelling is attested fifteen times, while the younger spelling appears only two times.¹⁷

¹⁷ The fricativization of *t* and *k* in unstressed word-final position appears already in the thirteenth century (Stefán Karlsson 2004: 19; Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: xxii, xxxii). AM 350 fol, dated not earlier than 1363, preserves the forms with “t” appearing alongside with “ð” (Jón Helgason 1926: 70), while the orthography of Holm perg 16 4to, dated not earlier than the second half of the fourteenth century, contains forms with “d” along with older “t” (Stefán Karlsson 1982: 72, 75). According to Jóhannes Jóhannsson (1924: 41–42), some manuscripts preserve the forms with the word-final “k” and “t” as late as the sixteenth century. Even though occurrences of word-final “t” and “g” are attested in some sixteenth-century manuscripts, the author of this article could not find examples of sixteenth-century manuscripts which use exclusively word-final “k” or “t”, while the old and new forms frequently co-occur for example in AM 510 4to, dated to the middle of the sixteenth century, and AM 548 4to, dated to 1543, where the word-final “t” can be found alongside the word-final “d”; and in the second hand of Kollsbók, dated to the late fifteenth-century, (Ólafur Halldórsson 1968) and AM 510 4to, where “k” and “g” co-occur. For the discussion of the dating of AM 510 4to see Jón Helgason (1932)

The orthographic change “vá” > “vo” is found in the fragment in forms such as “uotta” *vátta* (1v:12) and “fuó” *svá* (1v:23). There is, however, one example which is unclear due to the condition of the support, where the older spelling, “kuānfang” *kvánfang* (2v:24–25), seems to be represented.¹⁸

Dental fricatives in non-initial position are denoted with the rounded “ð”, with only one exception, “fiþan” *síðan* (1r:1), where the letter “þ” has been used in the mid-word position. This example might be explained by the aesthetic preferences of the scribe, who used letters with long ascenders in the top lines of each leaf, or due to the following abbreviation mark.¹⁹ Both explanations seem equally probable, but it is worth emphasising that elsewhere *síðan* is simply spelled with “ð”, also in the abbreviated forms, such as “fidan” (1v:3). The same aesthetic criteria of using the letters with long ascenders in the top lines is attested in “laugberkf” *lögbergs* (1v:1) where “k” is used, as shown in Figure 6, while elsewhere spellings with “g” dominate, for example “laugbergf” (1v:12). The letter “ð” gradually falls out of use in the course of the fourteenth century and is very rarely seen after 1400, therefore the absence of “ð” points towards the end of the fourteenth century or later.²⁰

¹⁸ The orthographic change of “vá” to “vo” began in the first half of the fourteenth century. In the older literature, this change was interpreted as a two-step process, a progressive umlaut, when in the mid-fourteenth century *vá* changed into *vó* and then not earlier than around 1600 *vó* into *vo* (Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: xi–xii; Jóhannes L. L. Jóhannsson 1924: 35–36). However, in the more recent scholarship, a different explanation has been proposed. As Hreinn Benediktsson (2002: 231–33) discussed, in the fourteenth century the low back long *á* became a diphthong [au], everywhere except immediately following *v*, where it remained the low back monophthong [ɔ:]. The [ɔ:] consequently merged with the old short mid *o*, which got lowered to [ɔ]. As the diphthongized vowel *á* retained its old spelling (“á”, “æ”, etc.) the orthographic representation of *vá* gradually changed to “vo/“uo”, which does not necessarily mean that a phonological change took place.

¹⁹ The use of “þ” to accommodate an abbreviation sign appears, for example, in the thirteenth-century manuscript GKS 2365 4to (Hreinn Benediktsson 1965: 74).

²⁰ According to Stefán Karlsson (2002: 835), “þ” in the non-initial position was rather rare from around 1300 onwards, but sporadically appears up to 1400. The rounded “ð” started to replace the letter “þ” in the thirteenth century, becoming dominant in the mid-fourteenth century. Under Norwegian influence, after the year 1400, the letter “ð” barely appears and “d” is used instead. According to Hreinn Benediktsson (1965: 74), in the early stage, in some hands, for

There are not many examples of the middle voice in the fragment, but the scribe is relatively consistent in its orthographic representation, employing “zt” five times, but “z” only once, as presented below in the complete list of occurrences: “beríazt” *berjask* (2r:4, 2r:11, 2r:24), “bezzt” *bersk* (2r:8), “faṇṇṭ” *fannsk* (2v:25), “retz” *rézk* (2r:5).²¹

Of the seven instances of words where the palatalized *g* could appear, four of them reflect the palatalization orthographically: “rada gíozd” *ráðagørð* (1r:24), “gíozdu” *gørðu* (1v:1), “gíozdi” *gørði* (2v:5), and “gíozfer” *gørvir* (2r:17). The scribe denotes palatalization before *ö* (< *o* + *ø*), but not before *e*, as in “geck” *gekk* (1r:25), “kemr” *kemr* (1r:14), and “geng|u” *gengu* (1v:11–12).²²

The linguistic analysis reveals the appearance of archaic forms, such as lack of evidence for the fricativization of *t* in word-final position and lack of evidence for the diphthongization of *é*. The analysis also reveals the appearance of relatively young features, such as diphthongization before *ng* and the orthographic change from “vá” into “vo”. Given the coexistence of the archaic and innovative features, the date of the manuscript’s writing can not be earlier than the last quarter of the fourteenth century. An overview of the selected linguistic and orthographic features used to establish the manuscript’s date of writing is given in Table 1.²³

example in AM 677 4to (dated to the beginning of the thirteenth century), the rounded “ð” is used to denote the fricative *ð* whereas the straight “d” is used for the stop.

²¹ According to Haraldur Bernharðsson, the spelling of the middle voice is especially useful for dating late medieval manuscripts (from the period ca. 1375/1400). The predominant notation for the middle voice in the fourteenth century is “z”, but the spelling “zt” appears sporadically in the first half of the fourteenth century, and becomes more frequent, alongside “st”, in the second half of the fourteenth century. Around the year 1400 “z” is still the predominant form, but in the first quarter of the fifteenth century “zt” starts to dominate (Haraldur Bernharðsson 2013: 410, Kjartan G. Ottósson 1992: 112, 121–24).

²² This practice appears in the fourteenth century when palatalization is denoted orthographically before the vowels *e* and *ö* (< *ø*) and occasionally *e*. In the fifteenth century the palatalization appears more often and increasingly before *e* (Stefán Karlsson 2004: 45; Haraldur Bernharðsson 2013: 417).

²³ The presented analysis is to a great extent based on the 3rd draft of Haraldur Bernharðsson’s (2013) *Icelandic. A historical linguistic companion*, I would like to express my gratitude to him for sharing this work with me.

Criterion	AM 162 B α fol
Dental fricatives in non-final position	“d” (67) : “þ” (1)
Orthographic form of the middle voice ending	“zt” (5) : “z” (1)
Merger \acute{e} + \emptyset > æ	in evidence (9 + 3 uncertain)
Derounding of y into i	no evidence (17)
Diphthongization before gi	in evidence (3)
Diphthongization before ng/nk	diphthong (4) : no diphthong (1)
Orthographic change “vǫ” > “vo”	“vo” (9) : “vǫ” (1)
Fricativization of word-final t	no evidence (40)
Fricativization of word-final k	“k” (15) : “g” (2)
Diphthongization of \acute{e}	no evidence (13)
Vowel epenthesis	“r” (7) : “z” (7) : “ur” (1) : reverse spellings (2)
Consonant epenthesis	no evidence
Palatalization of g and k	in evidence before \ddot{o} (4) : no evidence before e (3)

TABLE 1: An overview of the linguistic and orthographic features used for dating.

Relative Dating

This section presents a comparative analysis of the orthography of AM 162 B α fol with the orthography of selected medieval manuscripts. In the first part the orthography of AM 162 B α fol is compared to other manuscripts preserving the section of text of *Brennu-Njáls saga* corresponding to that preserved in AM 162 B α fol. In the second part it is compared to some manuscripts which have an absolute dating and whose grammar has been a subject of an analysis in previous scholarship.

To establish the relative dating of AM 162 B α fol in the context of linguistic variation appearing in the medieval tradition of *Brennu-Njáls saga*, some of the main orthographic and phonological features of the fragment were compared with the corresponding readings in other medieval manuscripts preserving the corresponding text (ch. 7–9 of *Brennu-Njáls saga*), as presented in Table 2.²⁴

²⁴It has to be emphasized that this overview does not make any claims regarding the general

shelf-mark	ca. date	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
AM 162 B β fol	1300	o	æ, e	<i>illeg.</i>	þ	c	ua, va	eng
GKS 2870 4to	1300	o, ô, au, aʷ	æ	z, ft	ð	c, k	ua, va	éing, eng
AM 468 4to	1300–1325	o, au	æ, ɛ	z, ft	þ, ð, d	c, k	ua, va	ɛing, eng
AM 133 fol	1350	o, ô, aʷ	æ	z	þ, ð	k, g	ua, va	eng
GKS 2868 4to	1350–1400	o	e, ɛ	z, zt	þ, d	k, g	ua	eng, ing
AM 466 4to	1460	o	æ	z, zt	d, dd	g	uo	éing, eng
AM 162 B α fol		o, au	æ	z, zt	þ, d	k, g	uo, ua	eng, éing, eng

TABLE 2: Linguistic features appearing in the manuscripts which contain the section of text corresponding to that preserved in AM 162 B α fol.

The table presents a comparison of how various manuscripts represent the following features: 1: the vowel *ö*, 2: the vowel *æ*, 3: the middle voice, 4: dental fricatives in mid-word position, 5: the word-final *k*, 6: the orthographic change “*vá*” > “*vo*”, 7: *e* before *ng*.

The analysed readings of AM 162 B α fol share the most points of similarity with those of Skafinskinna (GKS 2868 4to, dated to ca. 1350–1400), namely four, and Oddabók (AM 466 4to, dated to ca. 1460), namely three. Regarding the orthographic change “*vá*” to “*vo*”, AM 162 B α fol represents a mixture of older and younger spellings, while in the corresponding passages Skafinskinna uses exclusively “*ua*”, and Oddabók uses exclusively “*uo*”. This might suggest the position of AM 162 B α fol between the two in a relative chronological order. The size of the analysed sample, however, and potential dialectal differences appearing in other manuscripts of *Njáls saga* pose challenges for making any definite claims regarding the relative chronology.

In order to narrow down the dating of AM 162 B α fol two manuscripts with established absolute dates of writing were employed for a comparative analysis of the orthography: Skarðsbók (AM 350 fol), dated to 1363 (Jón Helgason 1926), and Flateyjarbók (GKS 1005 fol), dated to 1387–1394 (Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir 2004). The results of the comparison are presented in Table 3.

grammar of the compared manuscripts, since the analysis was based exclusively on the readings corresponding to the text preserved in AM 162 B α fol.

Criterion	AM 162 B α fol (1400–1500)	AM 350 fol (1363)	GKS 1005 fol (1387–1394)
Merger $\acute{a} + \acute{o} > \acute{æ}$	+	+	+
Derounding of y into i	–	+	+
Diphthongization before $-gi$	+	+	+
Diphthongization before ng/nk	+	–	+
Orthographic change “vá” > “vo”	+	–	+
Fricativization of word-final t	–	+	+
Fricativization of word-final k	+	–	+
Diphthongization of \acute{e}	–	(+)	+
Palatalization of g and k	+	+	+

TABLE 3: Comparison of the orthography of AM 162 B α fol with AM 350 fol and GKS 1005 fol.

As presented in Table 3, the orthography of AM 162 B α fol bears a closer resemblance to the orthography of Flateyjarbók than to that of Skarðsbók. The changes that are registered in the orthography of AM 162 B α fol and Flateyjarbók but not in Skarðsbók are the diphthongization before ng/nk , the orthographic change of “vá” into “vo”, and the fricativization of word-final k . However, AM 162 B α fol has several features which are not seen in either of the other manuscripts, it shows no evidence of the diphthongization of \acute{e} , the fricativization of word-final t , or the derounding of y into i , thus its orthography is more archaic.²⁵

²⁵In order to put the dating of AM 162 B α fol in a broader manuscript context, three other manuscripts which have absolute dates established were consulted: AM 80 b 8vo (dated to 1473), AM 309 4to (part one fols. 1–29 dated to 1498), and AM 43 8vo (dated to 1507). None of these manuscripts has yet been the subject of an in-depth linguistic analysis, which would allow a comparison of the distribution of selected linguistic features with the orthography of AM 162 B α fol. I decided therefore to collect sample data from these manuscripts to find points of comparison with the orthography of AM 162 B α fol and establish a relative dating of the fragment. This was not, however, a systematic study and no claims concerning the orthography of these manuscripts in general can be made. The comparison of random samples from these

Conclusion

Given the aforementioned features, the date of the manuscript's writing is unlikely to be any earlier than 1375. The orthography of AM 162 B α fol shows a mixture of innovative and archaic features, but the former are bound to carry more weight than the latter, as the archaic features could be attributed to the influence of an exemplar. There are no examples of language change or orthographic evidence that would limit the time of writing to after the year 1400, and when only medieval manuscripts preserving text of *Brennu-Njáls saga* are considered, the orthography of AM 162 B α fol is chronologically between Skafinskinna (1350–1400) and Oddabók (ca. 1460). In brief, the script, the representation of the middle voice, and the use of “z”, along with the similarities to the orthography of Flateyjarbók (1387–1394), and to the decorated ascenders in AM dipl isl fasc IX 34 (1434), point to the period between the last decade of the fourteenth century and the first decades of the fifteenth century (ca. 1390–1440) as the manuscript's date of writing.²⁶

three manuscripts with the orthography of AM 162 B α fol showed that the orthography of AM 162 B α fol is more archaic, thus the fragment is most likely older than the youngest of the compared manuscripts (AM 80 b 8vo from 1473). For example, the very short text of AM 80 b 8vo demonstrates a number of younger orthographical features than AM 162 B α fol, such as the diphthongization of *é* and the fricativization of word-final *t*, which are not present in AM 162 B α fol. There are also examples of the fricativization of word-final *k* and the palatalization of *g* which can be found also in AM 162 B α fol. Other features are either not present in the text or the text does not contain words in which the change could be observed. In AM 309 4to the evidence for most of the key language changes was found, indicating that the orthography of this manuscript is also younger than AM 162 B α fol. No evidence of the palatalization of *g* and *k* has, however, been found in the sample consulted of AM 309 4to. Similar results have been obtained from the random sampling of AM 43 8vo, where all the key features, listed in Table 3, have been found.

²⁶ The dating of the manuscripts from this period is rather problematic due to the current state of research. The proposed date, ca. 1390–1440, is based on an assumption that a time span of 50 years should be given while dating an Icelandic manuscript. However, Jón Helgason's (1955: xii) statement regarding the dating of another broadly dated, fifteenth-century manuscript (GKS 2845 4to), that “[u]ntil Icelandic palaeography and orthography in the 15th century have been investigated more closely, it is difficult to place the manuscript within an exact span of years” still holds true and applies to the case of AM 162 B α fol.

A Note on the Text

The text presented below is based on a diplomatic transcription of the text of the fragment AM 162 B α fol.²⁷ The orthography of the scribe is retained, but the variant forms of the same characters are standardised, excluding the distinction between “s” and “f”, and “r” and “z”, which are retained. Abbreviations are expanded and marked in italics. Some of the expanded forms are based on the presumed value of the abbreviation rather than the written-out forms of the same word, as there are no written-out forms within the relatively short scope of the fragment. The word-division, punctuation and capitalization are retained, and the line breaks are denoted with a vertical stroke “|”. The parts of the text which are illegible due to damage to the support and fading are represented as zeros within square brackets (when it is possible to approximate the number of missing characters) and as [...] (when it is not possible to approximate the number of missing characters) without any supplied text. All partly unclear readings are denoted by underdotted letters. The letters which are omitted by the scribe are supplied and placed within angle brackets.

²⁷The earlier version of this edition can be found in electronic form, with three levels of transcription, in the Medieval Nordic Text Archive (Kapitan 2016). The current edition has been revised and corrected.

Edition of AM 162 B α fol, ff. 1r–2v

||¹ *fem* bezt *fiþan* mun *hann* fara j *fiozdu* *ueftur ok figm* |² *undz med honum ok* 1r
munn hann flytja allt feitt ueftan |³ *þat er hann a þa[o]* j *fiozdum ueftur ok uera* j
burt leingi |⁴ *f[...]* *f enn þa er menn rida til þingf ok aller eru* |⁵ *[...]rid[o] þeir f[o]*
rida ætla skalttu rífa ur reykju |⁶ *ok ku[ooo]* *a menn til ferdar med þer faurunauta*
þína |⁷ *[...] til huilu þinar* |⁸ *[...] þer faurunautar þinir enn þu skalt nefna uott* |⁹ *[...] feigia skilit uid hann lag* |¹⁰ *skiln[...]* at *Alþingif mali* |¹¹ *[...] ok all[o]h[oo]ar laugum*
flíka uotta skalttu hafa fyzer |¹² *kalldyþum fidan rid þu a b[2[o]t ok rid laxar dalf*
heidi |¹³ *ok fuo til hollta uozdu heidar ok rid þar til min þin mun* |¹⁴ *leitaf til hruta*
fiardar enn er þu kemr til min mun ek |¹⁵ *fyrir f[oo]* *malinu ok skaltu alldzeigi*
fidan koma honum j henndz |¹⁶ *h[o]* *ridz nu heim af þingi ok uar rutr heim komín*
ok fagnar |¹⁷ *[...] hon t[oo]* *u[el] mali hanf ok uar uid hann blid þeira f[...]* *g[oo]*
þau [...] *enn er uoradi tok hun fott* |¹⁹ *ok lagd[oo]* [...] *[o]eftr j fiozdu ok bad hennu*
|²⁰ [...] *þingi bio hun ferd fina* |²¹ *a b[2[...]]* *foz med aullu f[o]* *hennu uar fyrir fagt*
ok reid a |²² *þing* [...] *leitufdu hennar ok fundu* |²³ *hana* [...] *tok [ooo] uid d[oo]tur*
finni ok spurdi hana huerf |²⁴ *u hun hefði med farit rada gíozd hanf huergi hefi*
|²⁵ *ek af b[2]ugdít fagdi hun hun geck einn dag til* ||¹ *laugberkf ok fagdi skilit uid* 1v
rut þetta gíozdu menn |² at *nyum tidindum unnr foz heim med faudz finum* |³ *ok*
kom alldzeigi ueftur þangat fidan |⁴ *RUTR kom heim ok bza miok j bzun* |⁵ *er*
kona hanf uar j bruttu ok uar hann stiltur uel hann |⁶ *uar heima aull þau miferi*
ok red uid aunguan mann um |⁷ *fitt mal annat fumar epter reid rutr til þingf*
ok hoskuldr bzoder |⁸ *hanf med honum ok fiolmenntu míog. Enn er hann uar*
kominn a alþing spurdi hann at mordr gígia ueri a þingi honum uar fa |¹⁰ *gt at*
hann uar þar ætludu þat menn at þeir mundu ta |¹¹ *la um mal fin enn þat uar ecki*
einn huern dag er menn geng |¹² *u til laugbergf nefndi mordr fer uotta ok leyfti*
fefau |¹³ *k a henndz rutu um fe mal dottur finnar ok taldi niu tigi* |¹⁴ *hunndrada*
leyfti hann þa til giallda ok ut greizlu ok let |¹⁵ *uirda .jjj. marka utlegd hann*
leyfti j fiozdungf dom |¹⁶ *þann fem faukinn atti j at koma at laugum lyfti hann*

8 þu] Could be “þa” or “þu”. 25 fagdi] The word seems to be written “fagi” where the letter “g” was corrected into “d” creating a ligature “g”, although it is only partly legible. 4 RUTR] A space was left blank for the initial, but the letter “H” was never inserted. I decided to not supply “H” as the scribe spells Hrutr as “Rutr”. 10 ætludu] A scribal error and a scribal correction of “g” into “ð”. 14 hunndrada] The superscript “r” stands for a single character.

|¹⁷ lauglyfing at heyzanda hlíodí at laugbergi enn er |¹⁸ hann hafði þetta mælt
 fúaradí *rutr* meir heimter þu þe|¹⁹ttá mal eda fæker med fiar æ girnd ok kappi er
 til |²⁰ heyzer dottur þínar enn med goduília ok dreíng fkap |²¹ ennda mun ek her
 lata fuoz j moti koma þuiat þu |²² hefer eigi feít j hendi þer þat er ek fer med Mæli
 ek |²³ fuo fyrir at þeir fe aller heyzandi uottar er hía eru |²⁴ at laugbergi at ek fkoza
 2r þer morder æ holm her ||¹ a þínginu ok fkal uid lígia mundzinn allr ok |² þar legg
 ek uid annat fe iammicit ok eigi fa huort |³ueiggia feít er af audrum ber enn ef
 þu |⁴ uillt eigi beríazt uid mik þa fkaldu af allri fiarh|⁵eimtumni þa þagnadí morder
 ok retz um uid uíni fi|⁶na um holmgaunguna honum fúaradí józundz godi |⁷ eigi
 þarftu at eiga rad uid off um þetta mal þvi at þu |⁸ matt þat uíta ef þu bezzt uid
 rut at þu munt |⁹ bædi lata lífit ok feít er rutí uel farít . þvi at hann er |¹⁰ mikull
 af fíalfum fer ok manna fræknaztr þa kuad morder |¹¹m þat upp at hann uilldí eigi
 beríazt uid rut nu uard op mikít |¹² at laugbergi ok ohliod mikít ok hafði morder
 ína me|¹³ftu fúuúrdíng ríða menn nu heim af þíngi þeir bræðr |¹⁴ hoskuldr <ok>
 rutr ríðu uestur til reykiar dalf ok gíftu at lundí |¹⁵ þar bío þíofstolfr fon bíarnar
 gullbera regn ha|¹⁶fdí uerít mikít um daginn ok uoru menn ozdner uoter míok
 uoru |¹⁷ þa gíozfer elldar fat þíofstólfr j millum þeira bzædra |¹⁸ fueínar tueír leku
 æ golfinu þat uoru ueízlu fuei|¹⁹nar þat uoru ueízlu fuínar þíofstolff mæe eín lek
 hía |²⁰ þeim þeir uoru malger míok ok ouítrær annar mælti |²¹ ek fkal þer morder
 uera ok stefna þer af konunni ok finna |²² þat til at þ(u) faer eckí fozdít annar
 fúaradí ek fkal þer rutr |²³ uera rek ek þik af allri fiarheimtumni ef þu þozer |²⁴ eigi
 2v at beríazt uid mik þetta mæltu þeir nauckrum finnum ||¹ ok gię[o]điżt nu h[ł[o]tur
 m[ik]i[ll] af heima monnum þa rei|²ddiżt hoskuldr ok lauft f[łooo] med sprota þann
 fem morder |³ nefnd[oo] enn sprotum kom j an[...] ok fpręçķ fyrir |⁴ hoskuldr mælti
 uid fueini[nn] uertu uti ok drag ę[oo] fpott at off |⁵ rutr mælti gack híngat til mín
 fueinnenn gíozdi fuo |⁶ rutr dzo [oo]ngz gull af henndę f[łoo] ok gaf h[onum] [...] |
 |⁷ far j bz[oo]t ok leíta æ aung[...] fuei[nn] [oo] f[oz] |⁸ fidan æ bzutt `ok' mælti þín[...] f[ka]l
 ęķ u[đ] b[ř] [o]g[đ]a. af þesfu feck rutr gott[...] h[ł]eiman uestur ok er nu [...] m[ar]dar

4–5 *fiarheimtumni*] The superscript “r” overlaps with the accent mark of “i”, expanded as “r” because “fiarheimtumni” (2r:23) is also abbreviated with the superscript “r”. Elsewhere the superscript “r” stands for “ur”, as for example in “dottur” (1v:13). 19 *þat*–*fuínar*] Dittography involving the repetition of “þat uoru ueízlu fuínar”; but with a scribal error (*sveínar* “suínar”).

|¹¹ <N>U e<r> þat *tul* ma[...] hallger[...] |¹² *ok er* kúe[...] *ok mĩk*[00] *uęxti ok* faguzt
 hą|¹³ *rít ok* *fu*o *mĩk*ıt at *hun* *mątt*ı *hęyl*ıą *fig med* *hun* *uą*r ąu|¹⁴ *rlynd ok* *feingfaum*
ok *fkaphaurd* *þioftolfr* *het* *fo*[000] |¹⁵ *hennar hann* *uar* *faudz* *eyfkr* at *ętt* *hann*
*uą*r *fterkr* [...] |¹⁶ *uel ok* *hafdı* *margann* *mąnn* *dęęp*ı *ok* *þęttą*n *ąuąuą*n [...] |¹⁷ *þat*
uar *męlt* at *hann* *uęri* *hal*[0000] *ęing*ı *fkapb*[...] |¹⁸ *adz er* *ęęfnd* *þozualldz* *hąnn*
 [...] *of*[000] *ęf* *hąnn* *þi*o |¹⁹ *a* *męđalfelldz* *ft*[000] *hann* *uą*r [...] |²⁰ *att*ı *ęy*[00] *þę*
er *biarn* *ey*[o] *hęita* *þę*r *ligg*ıą *ut* [...] |²¹ *eida* *f*[o] *rdi* *þadan* *hafđ*[o] *hąnn* [...] *fkreid*
fem *hann* *þu*|²² *rfti* *þozualldz* *uą*r *m*[...] *teif ok* *nauk*[000] |²³ *badz* [o] *fkap*ı *þat*
uar [000] *hue*[...] *þę*r *fed*[o] *ą*r [...] |²⁴ *luđu* *um* *med* *fer* *huar* *þoz*[...] *ą* *leita* *um*
kuą|²⁵ *nfang* *enn* *þat* *fanzt* *a* at *þozu*[000] *d*ı *þott*ı [00] *hųę*r|²⁶ *gi* *fullkosta* *of*ı *uf*r
 [...] *b*[00]ıą *hallgerdar* *lang*

¹¹ <N>U] A space was left blank for the initial, but the letter “N” was never inserted, I supplied the word-initial “N”. ²³ *fkap*ı] Superscript “a” stands for a single character.

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Resumé

AM 162 B α fol er et håndskriftfragment, som indeholder tekst fra *Brennu-Njáls saga*. Fragmentet er et dobbeltblad i kvartformat, der blev brugt som et bogbind eller som bogomslag, og derfor er håndskriftets tekst på store dele af folio 1r og 2v utydelig. Fragmentet opbevares i en kasse, som indeholder ti fragmenter af *Brennu-Njáls saga* med arkivsignaturen AM 162 B fol på Árni Magnússon-instituttet for islandske studier i Reykjavík, Island. Selvom AM 162 B fol benyttes i variantapparater i Konráð Gíslasons (1875) og Einar Ól. Sveinssons (1954) udgaver af *Brennu-Njáls saga*, har håndskriftets tekst aldrig været udgivet i sin helhed.

Denne artikel er en diplomatisk tekstgengivelse af AM 162 B α fol med en indledning, der indeholder en beskrivelse af en række skrift- og sproghistoriske træk, som i større eller mindre udstrækning kan tjene som pejlemærker for datering af fragmentet. Fragmentets ortografi sammenlignes med ortografien i to håndskrifter, der har absolutte dateringer, AM 350 fol (1363) og GKS 1005 fol (1387–1394), men også med ortografien i en række andre middelalderlige håndskrifter, der bevarer den passage af *Brennu-Njáls saga* som findes i AM 162 B α fol, med henblik på at etablere håndskriftets relative alder. Ortografien i AM 162 B α fol er tættere på ortografien i GKS 1005 fol end i AM 350 fol, og blandt andet derfor kan fragmentet dateres til perioden mellem sidste del af det 14. århundrede og første del af det 15. århundrede.

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